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Rep. Peter Welch voted late Thursday to give a boost to Vermont's growing solar power industry by investing in research and development in solar technology.

The Solar Technology Roadmap Act (H.R. 3585), which facilitates the research, development and demonstration of American solar technology in partnership with the private sector, passed the House by a vote of 310 to 106. The legislation builds on investments in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to create jobs, reduce energy costs, and combat climate change by promoting renewable energy.

Welch strengthened the legislation by successfully amending it to call for enhanced monitoring of federally funded solar demonstration projects. The amendment will ensure that innovative projects can be compared evenly, ensuring success for the best developments.

"Investing in solar technology creates jobs in Vermont and across the country while addressing the challenges posed by climate change and rising energy prices," Welch said. "As Vermont continues to innovate in renewable energy and efficiency, this funding will further boost our state's green energy economy."

The Solar Technology Roadmap will lay out short-term and long-term objectives for solar technology research and development while accounting for, and mitigating, any negative environmental impacts. It will provide a path forward to make solar technology more dependable and widely available to American consumers. The Roadmap will also authorize the Department of Energy to award grants to entrepreneurs, research agencies and academic laboratories that are leading the field in solar tech development and solar manufacturing.

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